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ABSTRACT

An award winning program, the Teacher-Research Institute of the Maryland Writing Project at Towson State University, is described, along with six other state college programs that received special commendations by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). Towson State University won AASCU's G. Theodore Mitau Award for Innovation and Change in Higher Education. The Towson Teacher-Research Institute offers teachers at all levels (primary, secondary, and postsecondary) the opportunity to improve their instruction by conducting research in their classrooms. At the institute, teacher-researchers and other specialists train faculty participants in classroom research techniques. Participants then form teams to discuss the techniques, share insights, and plan research projects. Six other AASCU institutions received commendations for their innovative approaches to excellence in education: Illinois State University, Normal, for its Onarga Project; Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, Texas, for its Four-Year Undergraduate Chemistry Research Program; Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, North Carolina, for WCU Micronet; Murray State University, Murray, Kentucky, for its Center for International Programs; the University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, for its Adult Retention Mentor Program; and Western Oregon State College, Corvallis, for its "Quality Assurance Program: Warranty of First-Year Teachers." (SW)

Innovation and Change In State Colleges and Universities

The G. Theodore Mitau Award, 1985

ED264799

"What is
important
is an attitude
that welcomes change,
a commitment
to explore new
approaches."

aascu
American Association
of State Colleges and Universities

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AASCU is an organization of more than 360 state colleges and universities located throughout the United States, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. The member institutions educate one out of five of all U.S. college students and about one out of three students attending four-year institutions. AASCU institutions have a strong commitment to provide educational access to members of their communities and regions, a commitment reflected in their low-cost, high-quality undergraduate programs, responsive continuing education programs, and extensive public-service programs. Two-thirds of the institutions offer graduate programs, many have doctoral programs, and a growing number offer study opportunities at the less-than-baccalaureate level. Their unique strengths are represented in high-quality undergraduate education that combines the values of the humanities with the skills and knowledge of professional and applied career-oriented programs.

Innovation and Change In State Colleges And Universities

The 1985 Mitau Award Winner
Towson State University

Special Commendations
Illinois State University
Midwestern State University
Murray State University
University of Southern Mississippi
Western Carolina University
Western Oregon State College

aascu SM

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202/293-7070

Allan W. Ostar, President
November 1985

The G. Theodore Mitau Award

The Award

The G. Theodore Mitau Award for Innovation and Change in Higher Education is presented annually to a state college or university that has demonstrated a strong commitment to academic improvement, innovation, and educational excellence. That commitment is expressed in higher-quality programs that break new academic ground in order to meet changing educational needs.

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) confers the award to recognize the achievements of one of its member institutions and to encourage other institutions to seek creative, nontraditional approaches that may be more effective than standard academic practices in the circumstances of a changing educational environment.

The Educator

The AASCU Board of Directors established the award in 1979 to honor the contributions of the memorable educator Ted Mitau. The title of the award could not be more appropriate or well deserved. During his forty years of service as an administrator and teacher, Mitau advocated innovative changes in higher education to meet the emerging needs of new students. As chancellor of the Minnesota State University System from 1968 to 1976, Mitau united state colleges into a cohesive university system. He was instrumental in founding Metropolitan State University, a university without walls where students who have left the mainstream of education can reenter and receive credit for learning from their life experiences.

Mitau's new ideas in such areas as program development, admissions, and outreach benefited AASCU institutions and the entire higher education community. He was influential in the creation of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) and mobilized political support to authorize the now-successful Department of Education program. He later served on the Board of Directors of FIPSE. Mitau was chairman of the Association's Task Force on Innovation and Change in Higher Education.

A noted political scientist, Mitau taught at Macalester College in Minnesota for nearly thirty years. After his chancellorship he returned to teaching as a distinguished service professor of the Minnesota State University System and lectured at Minnesota campuses until his death in July 1979.

The Process

Any AASCU member institution may nominate itself for the G. Theodore Mitau Award, citing either a single program within the institution or the entire institution. An institution may make only one nomination per year. Nominations are requested in the spring semester each year, through a memo to all AASCU presidents.

The AASCU Committee on Alternatives and Innovation in Higher Education evaluates the nominations and selects the award recipient, with the concurrence of the AASCU Board of Directors. In establishing criteria for the award, members of the committee expressed the valid concern that such criteria be flexible enough not to constrain inventiveness or eliminate truly innovative and nontraditional programs. Nominations may include innovative approaches to a variety of academic and institutional activities ranging from curriculum development to financial management and public service; as a result, the relative importance of a single evaluation criterion may vary according to the type of program being nominated.

Nominations are judged for their overall strength, with particular consideration given to the following factors: educational improvement; innovation and excellence; and benefits to students, the institution, faculty members, and administrators. Recognizing that, for a variety of reasons, many excellent concepts are never realized and many fine programs do not survive the test of time, reviewers also look for evidence of successful outcomes. The nature of this evidence will also vary depending on the type of activity nominated. In some cases, it may be the number of students served or the amount of financial savings to the institution; in other cases, evidence of success may be of a less-quantifiable nature. In all cases, the program nominated should have been in operation long enough to indicate continued viability.

In its work with innovative programs, the committee has identified six areas in which efforts have been focused: increasing access for students, improvement of curriculum, improvement of teaching and learning, faculty and administrative development, finance and management, and public service. Nominations may be made in any of these categories, or, if appropriate, identified with more than one category. In order to avoid restricting nominations, the committee has also established an open category to be specified by the nominee. Guidelines for the preparation of a nomination are listed at the end of this brochure.

The 1985 Award Winner

The 1985 G. Theodore Mitau Award was presented to Towson State University for its Teacher-Research Institute of the Maryland Writing Project, which offers teachers of all grade levels the opportunity to improve instruction by conducting research in their own classes. At the institute, teacher-researchers and other specialists train teacher participants in techniques for conducting classroom research. Afterward, participants form teams to practice the techniques and share insights. Then they apply what they have learned in their own individual classrooms.

Towson State's program was singled out for the innovative way in which it links primary, secondary, and postsecondary education, bringing together K-12 and college faculty members as collaborative scholars. The institute serves as a prototype for both the improvement of research and the development of a successful cooperative venture among educators of all grade levels.

Special recognition

Six other AASCU institutions received special commendations for their innovative approaches to the issue of excellence in education. These programs, along with the winner's, are detailed in this brochure.

G. Theodore Mitau Award Recipient, 1985

Teacher-Research Institute of the Maryland Writing Project

Towson State University

Contact: Gloria N. Neubert
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Teachers can use classrooms not just for lessons but for laboratories.

The Maryland Writing Project in its short history has grown to include six major arms: Baltimore Area Consortium for Writing Across the Curriculum (BACWAC), Summer Institute, In-service courses, Student Summer Institute, Parent Education, and Preservice Education. Motivated by the overwhelming evidence that classroom teachers are not producers of educational research, the project added its seventh arm: the Teacher-Research Institute. Designed to convince teachers that they could conduct research in their own classes in order to improve instruction, the institute attracts language arts instructors from all grade levels—kindergarten through college.

Some of the best research in the field has been produced by classroom teachers. Such research has not always required control groups or highly sophisticated statistical calculations and experimental designs to produce valid results. Reports indicate that teacher-consultants who become teacher-researchers do not always produce research that has national implications but almost always learn more about the writing process and about how to improve their instruction.

Accordingly, the institute began in September 1984 with a country retreat at which a nationally recognized teacher-researcher introduced participants to research techniques appropriate for classroom use and convinced them of the importance of first using these techniques

Institute participants plan research projects for their classrooms.

to investigate systematically their *own* writing. Teams were formed, and for the next four months, teachers collected and analyzed their own writing. In January, the group members reconvened, enthusiastically shared their findings and insights, and then planned individual or collaborative research projects for their own classes.

An interesting array of investigative projects ensued, including:

- a description of a coaching model for elementary teachers to improve the teaching of writing
- use of peer tutors
- a comparison of the linguistic features of journal writing and English composition class writing
- the use of student journal writing to aid students in analyzing and reacting to literature
- a comparison of writing of students who do and do not take creative and expository writing electives
- the realities of teacher-student writing conferences
- cognitive and interpersonal teacher comments on student papers

Teachers share insights and experiences in a small discussion group.

- gender-related terminology in the writing of entering education majors
- the composition of peer response groups and the disconfirmation or confirmation of gender stereotypes
- analysis of the composing process when using the word processor
- analysis of elementary students' ability to identify effective qualities of peers' writing and to incorporate these techniques into their own writing
- an examination of the use of peer response in senior basic English class
- motivation for writing—a case study
- a description of elementary students' ability to reflect, regulate, and evaluate their own thinking on writing
- a description of the comments on student drafts and student response to such comments
- analysis of writing in science class
- exploration of how engaging in ethnographic research shapes how teachers formulate problems
- a description of the prewriting strategies of high school students.

An impressive list!

Local specialists continue to work with the teacher-researchers as needs arise, and small groups convene to share progress. Several teachers have applied for research grants, and six participants were invited to present the institute concept and their studies at the 1985 National Council of Teachers of English annual convention.

In just a short time, this institute has brought over twenty classroom teachers into the research community. Two institute participants have received NCTE teacher-research grants. And a university faculty participant has been awarded a release-time grant to pursue collaborative research with one of the NCTE winners. Future plans include making the institute self-sustaining by using the most successful of the original teacher-research corps as trainers in future institutes.

The institute demonstrates the skills and interests of teachers in improving their own professional circles and in contributing to the larger body of educational theory. It also fosters an effective alliance between Towson State University and classroom teachers in researching answers to questions teachers themselves consider important. And it provides a model of cooperation—a goal often discussed but seldom creatively achieved—for educational institutions everywhere.

At the retreat, teams form to pursue further research.

Onarga Project

Illinois State University

Contact: Robert Kerber
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Normal, IL 61761

Thanks to several ISU business students, Professor Robert Kerber, and concerned citizens, the once-dying small town of Onarga has begun to blossom again.

In a year-long "Problems in Business" class project, Professor Kerber's students have helped revive the town's economy by getting businesses to relocate in Onarga, creating jobs, finding uses for vacated buildings, and establishing a close rapport with the townspeople.

A struggling community in recent years, Onarga's misfortunes resulted from a newly opened interstate highway that diverted traffic away from the town. Businesses waned, jobs disappeared, and people began moving away.

Kerber, a professor of management and marketing, first heard of the community's plight from the U.S. Small Business Administration, accepted the challenge of trying to restore the town, and obtained approval and $4,000 from SBA for the project. The money was used to finance class trips to the town. Under Kerber's supervision and in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, SBA, and the Service Corps of Retired Executives, teams of students worked on seven revitalization projects for the town:

1. *Buildings on Main Street*. Find businesses to fill the empty buildings and improve the looks of the existing businesses.

2. *Day Care Center*. Explore the possibility of creating a day care center for children of the working mothers of Onarga.

3. *Drug Abuse Center*. Explore the possibility of starting a center in Onarga to create jobs for the townspeople.

4. *Old School Building*. Find possible uses for the second-oldest grade school in Illinois to prevent its demolition.

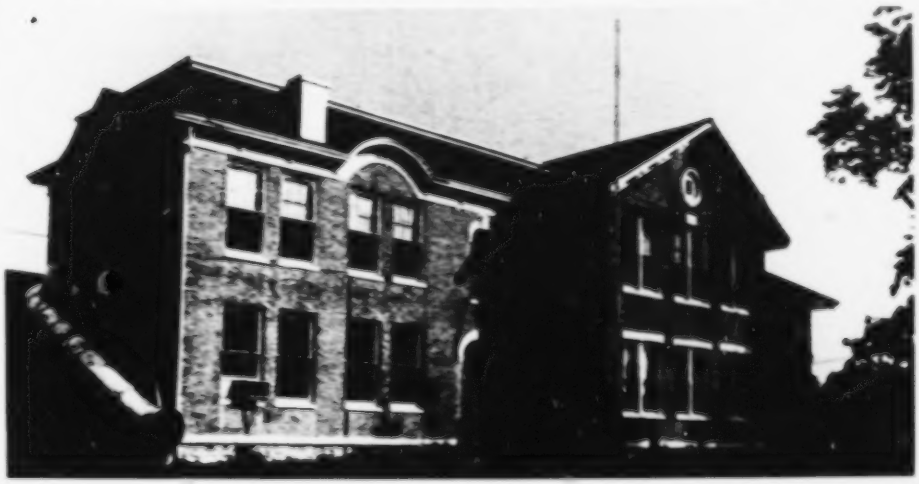
5. *Senior-Citizen Housing*. Determine the need for and possible sites for senior-citizen housing.

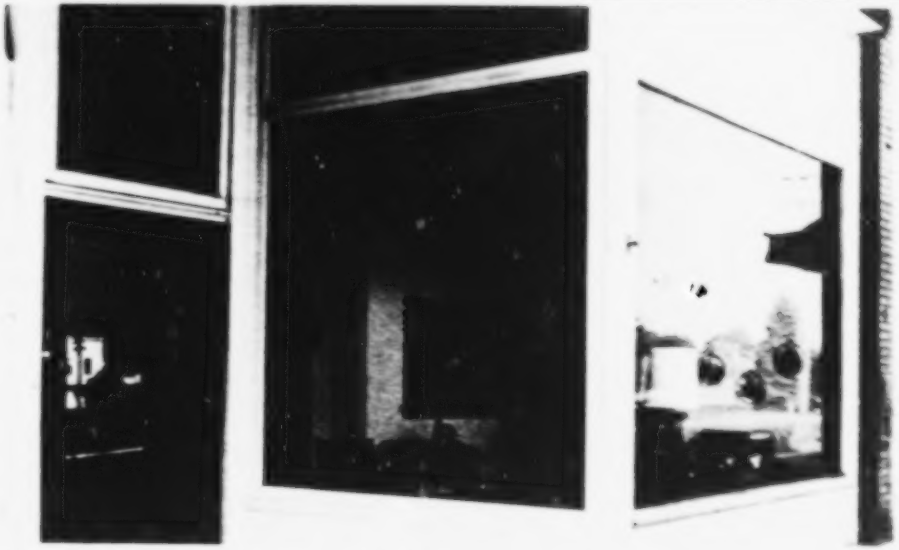
6. *Festival*. Revitalize the spirit of the town to unite in an organized manner and have a town festival.

7. *History*. Uncover Onarga's rich history.

During the first semester of the project, each team made investigations and turned in weekly progress reports. At the end of the semester, each team made recommendations for improving Onarga. For example, the Old School Building group suggested that the structure be sold to a business or used as a com-

Thanks to the Onarga project, this once-deserted school building is now a thriving manufacturing facility.





A new dentist's office reinvigorates a once-empty storefront.

munity education recreation center. The Festival committee proposed a two-day Fourth of July celebration including a softball tournament, a Miss Onarga Pageant, and an antique car show. To fill the empty buildings, the Main Street Buildings committee advised the seeking of dentists or doctors who might be tired of practicing in the "fast lane" and might welcome the peace of a country town.

During the second semester of the project, the students began seeking the ways and means of carrying out their recommendations. For example, the Day Care Center group conducted a survey of the townspeople to determine the extent of community support for the idea. The Main Street committee began contacting prospective dentists about setting up offices in Onarga. An old theater was remodeled and reopened. A commitment was obtained to build senior-citizen apartments.

At the end of the year, the students attended a town meeting to summarize their work and describe the support that would be needed to keep the rejuvenation going.

Deemed successful by the SBA, Professor Kerber, the students, and the townspeople, the project brought new life to Onarga. All of the empty buildings on Main Street were filled, the first annual town festival was held, a deserted school building was converted into a glass window manufacturing facility, jobs were created, a new tavern was slated to open in an abandoned bowling lanes building, and the people of Onarga were mobilized to work together for the good of the town. Plans for the near future include painting a mural on a downtown building and erecting a "Grow with Onarga" welcome sign.

The students' work in the town has been greatly appreciated. "These students have added life that we have been unable to generate on our own," said Joyce Hobbs, chamber of commerce president. "I don't know when I've seen such an enthusiastic, hard-working and personable group of people. Their ideas are good. I've been more than impressed."

Jerry Haynes, a local real estate agent, said, "The students have shown enthusiasm; they got the community involved. They've given the community a positive attitude, and I think that's what is helping to get some things done."

According to John Tilstra, president of the village board, the townspeople are now working together more than they have in the past. Residents and visitors were both part of the formula.

The Onarga project of Illinois State University is the first of its kind in the United States and is now being adopted by the Small Business Administration as a prototype to help dwindling towns around the country.

Chemistry Undergraduate Research Program

Midwestern State University

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MSU chemistry professor Rickey J. Williams explains a formula.

Many science educators are convinced of the extraordinary educational value of undergraduate research for students and the resultant faculty development incurred by the faculty mentors. However, many smaller institutions without graduate programs allow no release time for research and provide no significant funding for research. It is impossible to carry on a viable research program under these conditions.

However, the faculty of the chemistry department at Midwestern State University refused to accept the premise that a chemistry professor could not be a scholar as well as a teacher in a small university setting. The faculty gained the attention of the administration by initially using limited and somewhat obsolete equipment to complete some research that was published in respected journals. The publicity sparked the administration's interest: administrators understood that increased prestige and visibility could translate into increased enrollments, higher entrance test scores, and increased alumni donations.

A retired chemical engineer who served as stockroom manager-safety officer-glass blower was hired. Later, a freshman laboratory coordinator was added at quarter-time salary. These two inexpensive actions by the administration did not give formal release time to the faculty but made it possible for the faculty to devote more time to research.

The quality and quantity of equipment in the department is now excellent. Although departmental holdings would not compare with those of a Ph.D.-granting institution, they do compare favorably with those at many schools having a small M.S. program. This equipment was obtained primarily through faculty grants, research foundations, and industrial and local donations. The enrollment at MSU has increased over the past ten years to ap-

proximately 5,000 students. Although chemistry enrollment trends have paralleled this growth, the improvement of the quality of chemistry graduates is also evident. Midwestern State is the only state-supported institution in Texas without a graduate chemistry program that has had a chemistry program approved by the American Chemical Society (1969 to present).

During the past seven years, the department of chemistry at Midwestern State University has produced eighty-two baccalaureate graduates with majors in chemistry. Of these graduates, sixty-eight now hold advanced degrees or are currently enrolled in graduate or professional school programs. Of those holding advanced degrees, ten have Ph.D.'s in chemistry or chemical engineering, five have M.S. degrees in chemistry or chemical engineering, fifteen have M.D. degrees, and eight, D.D.S. degrees. Ten graduates are currently pursuing graduate degrees in chemistry, while twenty are currently enrolled in professional schools. Twelve of the B.S. graduates without advanced degrees are currently working in the chemical industry, and three are high school chemistry teachers. The four full-time faculty members have published seventy-four papers during the past eight years.

The one vital factor in this success story is the four-year undergraduate research program. All freshman chemistry majors are encouraged to enroll in a noncredit research orientation course designed to acquaint them with the concepts of chemical research and with the research interests of the faculty. Most of these freshmen were recruited by a small one-year chemistry scholarship. One lecture in the late fall semester in general chemistry is devoted to "Careers in Chemistry" and "Chemical Research." Subsequently, chemistry scholarships for the spring semester are offered to science students who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in general chemistry. As sophomores, selected students can begin continuing research projects in conjunction with a faculty member.

At present, twenty-two sophomores, juniors, and seniors are engaged in this optional research program. Nearly all of them receive modest academic year and summer research scholarships or are being paid equivalent amounts while working as instructional laboratory assistants. These students spend five to ten hours per week working on their research and may elect to receive one to three semester hours of academic credit each semester for their research by enrolling in a chemical research course. Large research projects can be broken down into smaller projects that can be completed in three years. Weekly lecture/discussion sessions by each research group accelerate the students' knowledge of fundamentals.

Although each student is encouraged to take control of his/her project, much cross-fertilization occurs. Currently, one chemist has a student working on light rotation of compounds, another on drug analysis, and a third on electroactive polymeric membranes.

All mentors require annual or semi-annual research progress summaries. Students actively participate in preparing any finalized research for publication.

Acceptance into the four-year research program is considered an honor by students, an attitude that undoubtedly increases their productivity and interest. Students in the program are provided travel by school bus and free lodging to attend at least one national or regional meeting. Most of these students present papers on their research. Funding for this purpose is obtained from local citizens, businesses, and discretionary funds from the university president.

Interdisciplinary research has begun to flourish within the past two years. Engineering, biology, geology, and physics students have applied for the research program. Collaboration among all science faculty members will certainly follow.

The innovative way that Midwestern State University's chemistry department has involved its undergraduates in research merits consideration and adoption by many other colleges and universities.

Internationalization Through Faculty Volunteerism, Center for International Programs

Murray State University

Contact: Jane Conzett
Coordinator
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In only five years, MSU has progressed from having virtually no international activity to having comprehensive institutional commitment. Faculty volunteerism has in five years created a thorough, successful, international focus at a regional and largely homogeneous state institution with minimal prior involvement.

Recognizing the need to internationalize and the improbability of institutional funding, in 1980 fourteen faculty members developed the Center for International Programs as a framework for internationalization composed solely of faculty members who received neither release time nor monetary supplements. A steering committee coordinates the activities of special-purpose working committees that address the following objectives: raising awareness of international issues, strengthening curricular offerings, expanding opportunities for international experience, developing a coherent foreign student program, participating in external networks, and seeking grant support. The committees' membership elects a director, who chairs the steering committee and provides overall coordination.

CIP has been successful both in involving faculty members and in institutionalizing programs. More than 15 percent of the faculty now serve on CIP committees—fifty-four in 1984, up from fourteen in 1980. Five interinstitutional exchange programs have been set up with foreign universities in Yugoslavia, Costa Rica, Kenya, Australia, and Belize. An International Studies minor has been established. More than ten internationally oriented courses have been developed, either by developing new courses or by infusing international elements into several existing courses, examples of which follow:

- development of Germanic, Hispanic, and French culture courses
- revision of historical geology course to include strong European component
- major expansion in number and range of offerings in international film course
- design and development of an upper-division/graduate-level course on Vietnam from an international perspective
- development of a field course in multicultural education in Belize for teacher education students
- expansion of a horticultural course to include a major section on British gardens and landscape architecture
- development of East European and Yugoslav lectures in courses across eight disciplines
- redesign of a nursing course to include international content on cultural dimensions of nursing
- development of a course on intercultural communications
- design of international marketing courses with a strong emphasis on European marketing. ql Already, CIP has had major success in acquiring external financial support. During the 1983-84 academic year, MSU received a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence from Africa. In summer 1984, the program received funds to send nine MSU faculty members on an eight-week study tour of Yugoslavia. CIP has also obtained a USIA Universities' Affiliation grant to support a three-year faculty exchange program with Kenyatta

Members of National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations give a press conference prior to their MSU program on Arab culture.

University College. In support of exchange activities with faculty members in Belize, the CIP recently received a second University Affiliation grant from USIA, as well as a "CAMPUS" grant for a program to upgrade the teaching skills of young Belize educators.

CIP has contributed to the development of interinstitutional cooperation by forging regional and national linkages of international programs. It has joined and/or helped establish six major consortia:

- Kentucky Institute for European Studies
- Cooperative Center for Study in Britain
- Kentucky Council for International Education
- International Student Exchange Program
- International Institute of Education
- National Association of Foreign Student Affairs.

To enhance on-campus opportunities for faculty members and students to learn about international issues, CIP publishes two newsletters: *Focus*, a monthly for the faculty, and *Communique*, a monthly for MSU's international students. In addition, each year CIP sponsors about four guest lectures, two or three conferences, an open house, and an "International Day." Conference topics have included "Latin American Politics," "Teaching About Africa," "Culture of Eastern Europe," "World Population," and "Arab Culture and Politics."

To strengthen MSU's programs for international students, CIP has developed policies governing international student enrollment, established international student services and support networks, initiated an organized international student recruitment effort, and increased and diversified international student enrollment.

Participation by both faculty members and students has increased steadily since the program's inception. In 1981, there were thirty students enrolled in short-term programs and none in long-term exchange programs; by 1984, there were seventy-five and twenty-three, respectively. In 1981, only five faculty members went abroad for MSU programs and fourteen served on CIP governance committees; by 1984, the numbers had risen to thirty and fifty-four, respectively.

A Finnish Co-op student interning in the department of safety engineering works with a member of MSU's physical plant.

Barry Johnson

The Center for International Programs provides a significant adaptive response to the needs of MSU's students and faculty members and a substantive infusion of quality and excitement into the academic arena on the MSU campus. It also provides an effective model for newly developing international programs at other colleges and universities.

Adult Retention Mentor Program

University of Southern Mississippi

Contact: Charlotte E. Tullos,
Director
Career Development
Center
University of Southern
Mississippi
Hattiesburg, MI
39406-5112

An Adult Mentor advises a new USM adult student.

Adult students can benefit from a strong ARM of support.

The Adult Retention Mentor (ARM) Program, an extention of the Adult Services Office at USM, was established in response to the needs of the increasing number of nontraditional-age students. Despite its numbers, this student population rarely receives the specialized services it merits and requires. ARM is deemed essential for adult students who must make drastic lifestyle adjustments to continue their education while maintaining responsibilities to family, job, and community. It provides early identification of potential problems that can be resolved, thus ensuring the retention of the adult student. The incoming students targeted for this service are those who are motivated but apprehensive, who have been out of school the longest, who have experienced a life crisis (e.g., divorce, death, job loss), who have any type of handicapping condition, or whose potential for academic success is doubtful.

ARM minimizes the adult student failure rate by affording at-risk students a safety net. Problems encountered by students who are also job holders and parents can rapidly fester into crises. The regular contact between mentor and new student offers opportunity for the Adult Services Coordinator to be informed and to intervene in time to prevent avoidable failures or withdrawals.

ARM offers its services chiefly through a group of specially selected and trained mentors. Through ARM, adult students with sophomore standing or above who have successfully made the transition into academic life are trained to provide ongoing personal contact, support, and resource referrals to incoming adult students. These student mentors are restrained from assuming the role of counselors, for which they are not qualified, but instead provide sympathetic understanding drawn from their own experience as new students. Students selected as mentors are men and women representing the broadest possible range of ethnic and national origins.

To be eligible for ARM service as a mentor, a student must (1) be a full-time undergraduate, (2) be studying at the sophomore level or above, (3) have earned at least a 2.5 GPA, (4) agree to serve for one year, (5) agree to counsel up to five students, and (6) agree to abide by ARM *Manual* policies. If accepted, these students will attend orientation and training sessions in which they will learn special study skills, communication skills, assertiveness, problem-

solving techniques, referral resources, motivating and goal setting, even suicide prevention. They are discouraged from attempting any psychological counseling or academic advising but instead are encouraged to concentrate on identifying the problem(s) and making referrals.

Mentors are expected to send personal letters of introduction to their assigned students, to give them tours of the campus, to exchange phone numbers and class schedules with them, to make personal contact with them at least once a week during the first three weeks of the semester and every other week thereafter, to submit monthly reports and annual evaluations, and, most important, to notify the ARM coordinator immediately of any potential problem for an assigned student.

Mentors serve as facilitators in the previously established university orientation programs, but their continued association with the new students throughout their entire first year provides personalized support and assistance. Whether the contact is by telephone or face to face, whether the association is individual or group, these new students feel they have someone to rely on in difficult times—someone who knows them and who can personally relate to the difficulties they are facing.

USM Adult Mentors gather to prepare for their orientation duties.

After ARM had operated only one semester, the attrition rate among new adult students participating in the program was 12 percent. The period of student adjustment was substantially reduced in intensity and duration. Overall performance (GPA) was improved, and participants in the program became eager recruiters of their relatives and friends to return to academic life. Students serving as mentors report feelings of great satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment. As the number of adult students continues to increase, plans are being implemented to expand the ARM program.

The University of Southern Mississippi's Adult Retention Mentor program offers a fine model for replication by other colleges and universities with rapidly increasing adult enrollments.

WCU MicroNet Project

Western Carolina University

Contact: Linda J. Perry, Director
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Western Carolina University
Cullowhee, NC 28723

With the aid of microcomputers, science can cross mountains.

WCU MicroNet, a computer network linking North Carolina science and math classrooms, was initiated in 1981 out of concern for teachers in remote, mountainous areas of the state. As in the rest of the country, public school student achievement in science and math had been declining in the state in recent years. The network was established to "enlarge the presence of the scientific community in the classroom" by encouraging contact between practicing scientists and those who teach science.

MicroNet offers a supportive network for these teachers by providing peer interaction, classroom activities, inservice courses, and assistance with microcomputer use and instruction. More than sixty-five North Carolina public schools use microcomputers, WCU's central computer, and WATS lines to communicate with each other, with WCU faculty members, with North Carolina biologists, and with other agencies. Teachers can use the network to consult with colleages, engage students in competitions and research, and update their coursework without the usual travel time and expense.

Until fall 1985 MicroNet utilized a portion of the VAX 11/780 in the university's computer center; a pair of Tandy 6000s are now the hub of the new stand-alone system. Each participating school uses a microcomputer equipped with a modem and communications software to access the system via telephone. The system provides electronic mail, databases, and text files (information keyed into the central computer) that can be read or searched. There have been no direct costs to schools others than their equipment, installation of phone lines, and local phone call charges. Teachers taking courses through MicroNet have been charged similarly to those taking conventional continuing education courses. WCU has provided computer time, three WATS lines, office space, operating budget, and a staff for the pilot project.

Franklin High School (N.C.) was the first to link up with the WCU MicroNet Project. Here, Franklin teachers work to get students on line and involved.

WCU MicroNet offers many benefits for teachers:

- *Removal of the Isolation Barrier.* Teachers have at their fingertips the expertise of all the network members. Communication and response is at the convenience of each teacher. An inquiry can be directed to an individual, a group of individuals, or everyone on the system.
- *Practical Help with Teaching.* Any teacher can request information from any or all participants. Answers to such questions as "How do I keep Planaria alive?" and "How can we quantify the amount of caffeine in different kinds of coffee?" can be quickly and easily obtained.
- *Guest Speakers.* Through the network, participants can electronically access a list of available speakers and arrange visits.
- *Computer Expertise and Programs.* Databases of public-domain computer programs, commercial science software packages, and computer journals are available on-line for search. Public-domain disks are copied at no charge when schools supply blank disks.
- *Library Support.* Network users can obtain WCU library journal reprints not normally available in a high school library.
- *Databases of Resources.* Databases of resource people, guided field trips, research projects, and agencies to assist in instructional activities can be accessed.
- *Professional Development Opportunities.* Users can learn of workshops, conferences, grants, and other programs.
- *Continuing Education Opportunities.* CEUs are awarded for MicroNet conferences and workshops. In addition, science faculty members offer graduate-level science courses almost entirely through the system and at the user's convenience.

Advantages for students include:

- *Competitions.* Frequent quizzes and announcements of winners spark classroom discussion.
- *Exchanges.* Ease of communication has led to electronic pen pals—Micropals"—who have traded news of experiments and field trips.
- *Participation in Field Research.* Students can help collect data for studies being conducted by practicing scientists. In one project, for example, students have gathered data on acid rain and its effects on stream PH. In another, students worked with the state wildlife commission to survey anglers' opinions on fishing regulations and to correlate them with fishing success during opening weekend of the fishing season. A bird-of-prey census and mast estimate (acorn and nut crop) are planned for the coming year.
- *Individual Projects.* Students can develop their own projects using resources available through the system. Teachers can also design individualized courses around network activities.

The success of the MicroNet Project is demonstrated by a steady increase in on-line usage and an 85-percent increase in school participation since 1984. Thirteen schools recently participated in the weekly BioQuiz competition. An Apple Education Foundation grant extended MicroNet's impact by placing twenty-eight microcomputers in fourteen high schools for use in science instruction. Several schools have started "MicroNet Clubs" to teach their students to use computers and the network. More than 200 North Carolina teachers have furthered their education through participation in courses and conferences offered through the project.

MicroNet's future looks promising. A recent NSF grant provides for a programmer and computer to develop a turnkey system that will serve as a national model for networking. The same grant provided summer stipends for teachers who help design activities for the network. A Title II grant will support conferences and workshops for both teachers and students. The system will be used to follow up on the Summer Ventures program, which brought 120 academically talented high school students to the campus during the summer of 1985 for integrated math and science. Middle-grade science and math teachers are slated for inclusion in the system.

WCU's MicroNet Project is a valuable model for computer networks in many educational situations.

Quality Assurance Program

Oregon State University-Western Oregon State College

Contact: Robert D. Barr, Dean
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The consumer-oriented guarantee has come to higher education.

In fall 1983, the Oregon State University-Western Oregon State College (OSU-WOSC) School of Education (a merger) announced a "Quality Assurance Program" that provided a warranty for all graduates of its teacher education program. Under the program, the school would provide no-cost consultation, support, and additional coursework to graduates who fail to meet the standards for first-year teachers set by their principals and the employing school districts.

"Unless each graduate performs at satisfactory levels of proficiency for a first-year teacher, the teacher and the local principal will receive assistance in developing and implementing a plan of assistance designed to improve teacher effectiveness in areas of identified weakness," Barr says. "And it will be at no cost to the teacher or district." The plan of assistance may include reenrolling the beginning teacher for tuition-free summer courses, sending a faculty member to observe the teacher in the classroom, or providing counseling, evaluation, and remedial work.

The program at OSU-WOSC, designed in cooperation with teachers and administrators throughout the state, works like this: The Oregon State Department of Education has adopted guidelines for the evaluation of first-year teachers that call for public school principals to perform three classroom observations. If a principal deems the performance of a beginning teacher "less than satisfactory," the principal develops a "plan of assistance" designed to improve the teacher's performance in specified areas of weakness. Each plan of assistance includes an objective analysis of observable difficulties and a statement of immediate goals for improvement.

This program of evaluation and assistance is a solid structure to which the concept of warranty assurance can be anchored. If a principal finds the performance of a first-year teacher unsatisfactory, the OSU-WOSC School of Education will review the evaluations of the teacher, help design the plan of assistance, and provide consultant services to both the principal and the teacher. Following are examples of the types of services that have been provided:

- on-site consultation with principal and teacher,
- On-site classroom observation,
- opportunity for students to participate in weekend professional development workshops and conferences, such as classroom management and assertive discipline,
- reimbursement for cost of substitute teachers to enable first-year teachers to work with college faculty members,
- assistance in curriculum development and instructional techniques,
- toll-free telephone assistance for teachers.

The warranty also includes an opportunity for beginning teachers who are having trouble to take additional education courses. All of these support services—and any others that become necessary—are provided at no cost to the school district or to the beginning teachers who use them.

The OSU-WOSC School of Education prepares more teachers than any other

OSU-WOSC School of Education Dean Robert D. Barr congratulates a new graduate of the warranty program.

program in the state, and most of the new teachers employed in Oregon each year are graduates of the OSU-WOSC program. Nearly 700 new teachers graduate annually from the OSU-WOSC program, and 90 percent are employed within three years after graduation.

The School of Education is providing warranty follow-up services for these graduates within existing budgets. Each department within the School of Education that recommends a teacher for certification bears the warranty responsibility for that teacher.

During the first year of the warranty program, nearly 100 graduates and their employers submitted the warranty agreement to obtain coverage. Of that group, there were many requests for referrals, information, and modest assistance. There were six formal requests as part of the warranty, and after two students were evaluated as having deficiencies as beginning teachers, they returned to campus and enrolled free of charge in the 1985 summer session.

The warranty has attracted national and international interest. It has been described in *New York Times*, *AACTE Newsletter*, *Journal of Teacher Education*, *Phi Delta Kappan*, and even *Stars and Stripes in the Pacific*. It was also used as a model for proposed legislation for a national warranty. More important, it has helped college faculty members become far more careful in their selection process, encouraged the raising of entrance and graduation standards, and provided an entirely new way of working with local schools.

During its first year, the warranty program was carefully documented and evaluated. Reports and comments will be used to strengthen it in the future.

Today, with more than 140 faculty members, the OSU-WOSC School of Education is the largest in the state and graduates approximately 700 new teachers each year. OSU-WOSC was the first major School of Education in the nation to implement a warranty. Since that time, a number of other education programs have started warranty programs, some of them using materials from OSU-WOSC. Other schools of education now using a warranty include those at Purdue University, University of Virginia, University of Northern Colorado, Eastern Washington University, and University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. Western Oregon State College is planning to expand the teacher warranty to cover graduates of its other programs. In January 1985, legislation was introduced in the House calling for a national warranty based on the OSU-WOSC model.

Nomination Guidelines

The G. Theodore Mitau Award for Innovation and Change in Higher Education is awarded annually by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities to that AASCU institution which best exemplifies the commitment of AASCU institutions to educational improvements, innovation, and excellence.

All member institutions of AASCU are eligible to nominate themselves for this award.

Nominations for the award may describe a single program within the institution or may describe the entire institution, but only one nomination may be made by an institution.

Nominations should identify the most appropriate category or categories for submission. The categories are:

- Increasing Access for Students
- Improvement of Curriculum
- Teaching and Learning
- Faculty and Administrative Development
- Finance and Management
- Public Service
- Other. (Please specify.)

Nominations should specify the following:

- Name of the instituion
- Name of the program nominated
- School, college, or department with which the program is associated
- Name of the person most directly responsible for the program
- Precis describing the program in 250 words or less
- Evidence of program effectiveness or success.

Brochures, detailed descriptions, or other publications relating to the nominated program may be included as appendices, but initial evaluation of the program will be based on the 250-word description. Please limit materials to items directly relevant to the program nominated and mark pertinent sections if the item is more than a few pages long. Please send four copies of all background materials.

Past Award Recipients

1984 Wright State University (OH)
"International Student Exchange Program"
Metropolitan State University (CO)
"A University for Adults"
Cleveland State University (OH)
"Cleveland Alternative Education Program"

1983 Northeast Missouri State University
"A Value-Added Model for Assessment"

1982 Southwest Texas State University
"Center for the Study of Basic Skills"

1981 Georgia State University
"Georgia Center Information System"

1980 Central Connecticut State College
"Modes of Thought in General Education Program"

1979 State University College at Brockport, New York
"Alternative College"